THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman'."

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOLUME XII] OCTOBER 1925 [NUMER 6

PRAYER

या मामाजन्म विनयत्यतिदुःखमार्गैः
आसंसिद्धेः स्वकलितैर्ललितैर्विलासैः ।
या मे बुद्धिं सुविदधे सततं धरण्याम्
साम्बा सर्वा मम गतिः सफलेऽफले वा ॥

SHE, Who, since birth, has ever led me on
Through paths of trouble to perfection's goal,
Mother-wise, in Her own sweet playful ways ;
She, Who has always through my life inspired
My understanding ; She, my Mother ! She,
The All, is my resort, whether my work
O'erflow with full fruition, or with none.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[Panihati Festival, 1883]

I

IT is one o'clock, Monday, the 18th June of 1883. Sri Ramakrishna is dancing among the devotees at the Panihati Festival.

It is known as the 'Flattened Rice Festival,' celebrated annually on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Jyaistha.* Inaugurated by 'Servant' Raghunath, it was perpetuated by Raghav Pandit. 'Servant' Raghunath was heir to a princely fortune, but his heart being averse to worldly joys, he would often escape the vigilance of his father to visit Sri Gouranga and seek for his permission to renounce the world. But Sri Gouranga would as often send him back, until he was convinced of his sincerity, when he accepted him as a monastic disciple. It was during one of those surreptitious visits that Nityananda one day challenged him, saying, "You thief, you often come here stealthily to taste of the Divine Love, and we know nothing of it! To-day you shall be punished for this,—you will have to feast the devotees by offering flattened rice to the Lord."

Our Master has been attending this festival almost every year. This year also arrangements had been made for his going there with Ram and other devotees. Ram arrived at Dakshineswar in the morning and, after dinner, drove over with the Master to the festival in the carriage which he had brought from Calcutta. Rakhal, M., Bhavanath and two other devotees also went with them.

All the way the Master was full of fun and merriment. But the moment he arrived at the festival, a great change came over him. He left the carriage and ran rapidly towards a singing party which Sj. Navadwip

Goswami was leading to the temple of Raghava. Ram and other devotees hastened after him, and after a long search, found him at the centre of the huge assembly dancing in profound ecstasy, and often losing himself in Samadhi. Sj. Navadwip Goswami was carefully guarding his person.

It is indeed an entrancing vision. Huge crowds are pouring in to catch a glimpse of this divine vision, and everywhere rise triumphant shouts in the name of the Lord, like the tumults of a raging sea. And the devotees throw flowers and sweets at the sacred feet of the Master.

Coming down to the normal plane, the Master sings:

"Behold, yonder come the two brothers who melt into tears at the very mention of the Lord's name!

"They dance themselves in bliss divine and set all the world dancing in ecstatic madness. And lo! when they cry, the whole world cries with them!

"And even though cruel hands are laid on them, they do ever stretch their arms in love ineffable!"

Singing, the Master dances and all the devotees dance with him; and perchance they feel that the very presence of Sri Gouranga and Nityananda is amidst them in the person of the Master.

Sri Ramakrishna sings again:

"The love of Gour is sweeping over Nudea making it reel under its stress."

Slowly the singing assemblage reach Raghava's temple. They perambulate the shrine and dance for a time before the holy images of Radha and Krishna, and then advance towards the Radha-Krishna temple.

Only a part of the assemblage can find entrance into the temple, most of the crowd wait outside the gate. Sri Ramakrishna is dancing before the Divine images in ecstatic joy, often lost in Samadhi, and the devotees rain flowers and sweets over him. Mighty shouts rise in the name of the Lord—'*Haribol,*' '*Haribol,*' thousands outside echo the triumphant cry and even the passengers of the boats that pass by on the Ganges catch the divine contagion and shout forth the Divine name.

The small courtyard of the temple is overcrowded. The devotees very carefully brought the Master outside to the drawing room of Mani Sen's house. The Sens are the custodians of the Radhakrishna temple and it is they that every year arrange for the Festival and invite the Master.

After a short rest the Master is taken by Mani Sen and his Guru Navadwip Goswami to an inner apartment for a light refreshment. Ram, Rakhal, M., Bhavanath and other disciples also are served afterwards.

II

It is afternoon. The Master is sitting on a couch in Mani Sen's parlour. Navadwip Goswami is sitting near him.

Mani Sen offers to pay the Master's carriage hire. The Master says, " Why should they (Master's disciples) accept it ? They earn money."

" (To Navadwip) Bhakti ripens to *Bhava* (ecstasy) Next comes *Mahabhava* and then *Prema* (love) and then the Final Realisation.

" Gouranga had this *Mahabhava* and *Prema.*

" This Love, when realised, makes one forget not only the world, but also the body which is so dear to oneself. Gouranga attained this Love, and he took the sea for the river Yamuna and jumped into it !

" An ordinary man cannot realise Mahabhava or Prema ; he can utmost reach to *Bhava.*

" Gouranga had three states of consciousness,—isn't it ? "

Navadwip : " Yes Sir : The inner state, the semi-external state and the external state. "

Sri R. : " In the inner state, he would be immersed in Samadhi. In the semi-external state, he would only dance. In the external state, he would sing the name of the Lord. "

Navadwip Goswami introduces his young son to the Master. He is a student of the Sanskrit Scriptures.

Navadwip : " He studies at home. The Vedas had almost vanished out of land. Through Maxmuller's publication we have the opportunity of studying them. "

Sri R. : " Too much study of the Scriptures is rather harmful. Know the essence of the Shastras, and you have no more need of the books. Knowing the essence, dive deep for God realisation.

" The Mother revealed to me that the essence of the Vedanta is that the *Brahman* is real and the world is false. She showed me that the substance of the Gita is what you come to, if you repeat the word *Gita* ten times, *i. e., tyagi tyagi* (one who has renounced). "

Navadwip : " Not exactly *tyagi,* but *tagi,* but it comes to the same thing. *Tagi* is derived from the root *tag* and means the same thing as *tyagi.* "

Sri R. : " This is the substance of the Gita : ' O man, renounce everything and practise Sadhana for the realisation of God '. "

Navadwip : " But sir, we do not feel inclined to renounce ! "

Sri R. : " You are Goswamis, in charge of the daily worship of the deities. You cannot renounce the world. Who will then conduct the worship ? For you is mental renunciation.

" The Lord Himself has put you in the world to teach men. However hard you may try you cannot renounce the world. For such is the nature He has endowed you with, that you cannot avoid working in the world.

" Sri Krishna said to Arjuna, ' What do you mean by saying that you won't fight ? You cannot desist from fighting, simply because you wish it. Your nature will make you fight '. "

This reference to the conversation between the Lord and Arjuna plunges the Master into Samadhi. In a while he becomes absolutely still. His eyes are wink-

less and breathing has almost ceased! Navadwip Goswami, his son and the devotees watch him in silent wonder.

Partly regaining consciousness, the Master says to Navadwip, "Yoga and Bhoga,—spirituality and enjoyment—you Goswamis have both of them. Now pray only this to Him from the depth of your heart, 'O Lord, I do not seek the glory of Thy world-deluding Maya, I want Thee alone.'

"True He is abiding in all creatures. Who, then, is a Bhakta?—He who abides in *Him,* he whose mind, heart, whole soul, has gone to Him.

"Some remark that this state of mine (*i. e.,* Samadhi) is a disease. But I say, 'Does one become senseless by meditating on Him Whose Intelligence is animating the universe?'"

Mani Sen is making small gifts of money to many of the invited Brahmans and Vaishnavas and offers five rupees to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master refuses to accept them, but Mani Sen still persists.

The Master impatiently asks M., "What do you say, can I accept?" M. raises strong objection: "No, never," he says.

Mani Sen's people put the money in Rakhal's hands, asking him to buy a present of mangoes and sweets.

Sri R. (*to M.*): "Now I am free of its responsibility. Rakhal has accepted the money, he will see to it."

Sri Ramakrishna gets into the carriage and starts for Dakshineswar. On the way, he has to pass by Mati Seal's Temple. There is a nice pond in this temple full of big fish. The Master has often asked M. to bring him to it that he might teach him (M.) how to meditate on the formless aspect of God.

The Master is suffering from severe cold, yet on reaching the temple, he gets down with the devotees and

going to the shrine, bows before the image of Sri Gouranga. He then goes to the eastern part of the temple where the pond lies. Innumerable fish are playing fearlessly, joyfully, in its water, for none do any harm to them, and visitors scatter grains of puffed rice on the water and they come up to the surface in large shoals to eat them.

Sri Ramakrishna says to M., "Just see the fish! Move about like them in joy in the Ocean of Knowledge and Bliss."

SUMMER YOGA CLASS AT THE SHANTI ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

NESTLED among the beautiful hills of sunny California, adorned with the wealth of myriads of wild flowers, there is a quiet holy spot where Nature has implanted a bit of her soul in each tree, rock and flower. Even the zephyrs that blow there whisper in soft cadence the eternal Om, and birds sing as if to burst their feathered throats in the joy of this hushed spot.

Is it any wonder then that those favoured mortals, who have been privileged to visit and dwell for a time in this garden of Mother, cannot find words to describe all that they find welling in their heart for expression ?

In June 1925, Swami Prakashananda called a large class of students to this beautiful retreat for a month of study, aspiration and enlightenment. How blessed was this group ! Mother spoke through all Her aspects in the heart of each one there.

Now She chided or dragged from its dark retreat some forgotten vice and cast it before our eyes so that we might " see ourselves as others see us. " Then She gave us love and sympathy, or forced pride, jealousy or rebellion out of some forgotten corner to smother it the next moment with courage and loyalty. The most subtle sin She dragged mercilessly before our eyes that we might in shame discard our pride and egotism, and humbly and charitably grow in love and reverence ; but always the Christ-Child dwelt there, the living embodiment and example of selfless love and compassion that in its purity can one moment kill that which enslaves and the next inspire the noblest patience and courage, both with equal loving kindness.

There is no sword so sharp as the sword of love to cut the festering sin from an enslaved character and no balm so soothing as a glimpse of that divine love-light even as it cuts from your heart forever some secretly cherished sin. Agony becomes as joy and joy as agony and all is swallowed in aspiration to reach the highest purity.

The Ashrama is ideally located for a Peace Retreat, set as it is in the hills. It is surrounded with them like an enor-

mous basin. Off the highways, distant from the trains, it is completely away from all the distractions and turmoil and noise of the world. The holy peace of the Ashrama sinks in deep, and in a few days the mind becomes calm and ceases to feel hurried and rushed. Thus it can more clearly reflect the spirit within and meditations in such peace and tranquility bring Divine Mother very close.

In the centre of the Ashrama grounds is what is called " the meditation cabin, " in which is an inspiring picture of Sri Ramakrishna, also one of the Holy Mother, and many smaller pictures of the Swamis. And although all the Ashrama is blessed and filled with high spiritual forces, yet this cabin seems to be an especial focus for them. It was indeed an inspiration to enter this Sanctuary and meditate. . . . .

The month was a busy one. Every evening at five-thirty the blowing of the horn would awaken the whole Ashrama to prepare the students for morning meditation. At six o'clock it was an inspiring sight to see the inmates march in procession with the chanting of " *Hari Om* " towards the meditation platform arranged under the shady spreading oak, and then to sit in squatting yoga-posture to perform the morning meditation.

After half hour silent contemplation, the Swami read to us from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna as yet not translated into English.

By listening to these wonderful conversations and teachings of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna recorded by "M.," in these rare books, we at times, would be transported into the banks of the Ganges and stand in the living presence of the Master, as it were.

At noon we again congregated for meditation in the same manner and the Swami read to us the instructions of Kapila to his mother Devahuti, from the Shrimat Bhagavatam. Until we heard the Swami, we had never known that this ancient book contained such rare gems of spiritual wisdom leading us almost to the threshold of divine illumination.

Again when the surrounding hills of the coast ranges reflected the glow of the setting sun and the gradual approach of the evening dusk would transform nature into the misty grey, we would sit in rapt meditation and the Swami would slowly awaken us from its charms by his mellifluous Sanskrit chants which, we love to hear again and again.

The two meals cooked and supervised by the ladies were served in the big dining room at eight-thirty a. m. and four-thirty p. m. The Swami called these meals " offerings " and each of us had to learn the Sanskrit chant for offering, " Brahmarpanam " etc. and repeated in unison before each meal. At the end of each meal, the Swami would give us choicest utterances of our Revered Swami Vivekananda from different volumes of his complete works.

The culmination of the month, the " high light, " was Dhuni Night. We all looked forward to it and tried as earnestly as possible to prepare ourselves for it ; tried to learn what seeds of egoism, pettiness, jealousy, etc., were still in us, taking root and growing. And truly it did seem like a rooting-out, a cleansing and a purification when we cast these seeds into the flames on Dhuni Night. It was in very truth the beginning of a new life.

The Dhuni Fire was lighted on one of the Ashrama hills, a hill rendered especially sacred because of the many Dhuni Fires and services held there. All through the night until dawn there was chanting, singing, meditation, reading, the ceremony of the burning of our faults, etc.And at dawn as we watched for the rising of the sun, suddenly the crescent of the new moon appeared from behind the hills, sharp and thin like a scimitar— it seemed another symbol of the cutting of the knots of our hearts ; a symbol of the beginning of a purer, ever more purposeful life.

During the month, besides the regular meditation and classes, each student was asked to observe a day of silence with the repetition of the Divine name.

Last Sunday in June the neighbours were invited and treated to a sumptuous feast of Indian rice and delicious curry and other delicacies cooked by the Swami himself.

The students as well as the children of neighbours gave recitations, sang songs, and then all enjoyed immensely such social gathering to which they look forward with great joy and interest.

No one can comprehend what a boon this Ashrama has been to us, living in the midst of constant rush, frenzied activities of city life. It is no wonder that our hearts rise in reverential gratitude to Sri Ramakrishna and his greatest apostle Swami Vivekananda and other blessed Swamis who made the existence of such an Ashrama possible for us in this Western world.

We feel a deep debt of obligation to India and especially to the Ramakrishna Mission for sending to us such worthy souls to help us and guide us in our paths towards the attainment of divine wisdom.

The month at the Shanti Ashrama was surely of tremendous import in the life of each one of us. No one could be there and fail to feel, in some degree, the subtle forces of the place. It was as if we were in the very arms of the Divine Mother and could feel the throb and beat of Her heart. It did affect all of us, differently, perhaps, yet such forces must inevitably leave a permanent impress on our lives and characters. To be sure such forces might stir up all the sediment which, all unrecognized possibly, was down at the bottom of our hearts, but could anything be more vitally important to us ? In the wonderful peace and quiet of the Ashrama there would be time and opportunity to throw out the sediment as it rose to the surface of our mind, and we could return to our tasks and duties in the world with purer hearts and a clearer knowledge of ourselves—with hearts strengthened and refreshed through our closer communion with Divine Mother.

WESTERN DISCIPLES AT THE FEET OF BHAGAWAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA

PESSIMISM AND LIFE'S IDEAL : THE HINDU OUTLOOK AND A CHALLENGE

(With a criticism of Life and an interpretation of History)

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(Continued from page 183)

Asceticism is not—it cannot be—anti-social. What is the VERDICT OF HISTORY ? Who have been the greatest benefactors of the world ? Whose hearts have more freely bled at the spectacle of human misery ? Who, I ask, have built up the great ETHICS OF PITY ? Has Lord Buddha with his *Bhikshus* clean vanished from our recollection ? Who were the soul of the great universities of Nalanda and Taxilla, of thousands of orphanages, rest-houses and hospitals for animals and men ? Shall we forget the Catholic monks of Medieval Europe because of the brag and bounce of the Protestants of the present day ? Not so did Carlyle. His Past and Present proves what I say. All the philanthropic activities of the Middle Ages—religious, educational and sanitary no less than the work of poor-relief—were theirs and theirs alone. But for them what would have become of the vaunted civilisation of the west ? Where would have been the continuity of European History from the Hellenic times to the present day ? When the barbarian hordes of Europe—Goths, Visi-Goths and Vandals—carried fire and sword before them and laid everything low and the Roman Empire with all her traditions shrieked and tottered to its fall, then who were the people who hugged to their heart and rescued from universal wreck the works of Aristotle and Plato, Homer and Virgil ? It is true that much corruption subsequently crept into the life of the Church and the lives of the monks, but that is not the fault of the ideal. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* Perhaps never in the history of man irreligion and hypocrisy have run so rampant in any department of life as in that of religion but is that any reason why religion itself should be abolished ? Reform by all means when reformation is necessary but *reformation is not deformation.* The true reformation of the Chruch might have been that of Savonarola, but Savonarola failed and was burnt at the

stake. Luther's success was due more to political reasons but he was a much lesser man than Savonarola. The cardinal mistake of Luther was the abolition of monasticism itself and the result is the frank materialism of Modern Europe. Let us return now to India. After skipping several centuries since the rise of Buddhism we stand face to face with that *avatar* of *Bhakti,* Lord Chaitanya of Bengal, who renounced all for the sake of his Krishna and whose message was that of kindness to all—love for all. Coming then to our own times, we see before us the dominating personality of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA who with a single stamp of his foot has left his impress upon history, whose thought is moulding the mind of India to-day—Vivekananda the hero, Vivekananda the prophet, Vivekananda the saint, Vivekananda the patriot, Vivekananda the world-teacher, the 'mighty-mouthed' expounder of Universal Religion, the "cyclonic monk," the "paragon of vedantic missionaries," the "Napoleon of Religion," the very genius of Hinduism incarnate. We feel his force and are struck with it, but very few of us have the insight to see the sorrow he felt for man and his abounding love for all. It is his sorrow that became his force for TRUE FORCE IS NOTHING BUT SORROW TURNED DYNAMIC. He was not one of your mealy-mouthed optimists or deluded meliorists. He boldly delivered the message of *Mukti* from the bondage of *Maya* and his voice was like the roaring of the lion, "like the sound of the sea." The generalissimo of Ramakrishna, his God-intoxicated Master, it was Vivekananda the Sannyasin who founded the Ramakrishna Mission and brought into being a new order of monks who are not only interpreting his message in the East and in the West as preachers on platforms and creating a literature which to many is the consolation of life and consolation of death but are also the pioneers of all true constructive work in the country, who form the vanguard of relief-forces in times of dire calamity and who sacrifice their lives without a word of demur before the mad rush of flood, terrible epidemics and grim famines like the true soldiers of a great commander. "Theirs is not to question why, theirs it is to do and die." Silent workers all —no fuss, self-advertisement or newspaper-puffing. *Daridra Narayan* (the poor who are our God) is a term we have learnt from Vivekananda, the true spirit of *seva* (service) he it is who has brought home to us—service through renunciation— and he it is who has taught us again to see the Self everywhere in Brahmin and Pariah, in Hindu, Moslem and Christian alike.

It is he who tackled before all the problem of untouchability and by democratising religion and without antagonising the Hindus gave Social Reform a new meaning and a new direction. No foppish business this, and Vivekananda was a *sannyasin.* His monks have started schools for the depressed, opened hospitals for the sick and introduced industrial education in villages to make the poor self-supporting. They could have done more if they had not been thwarted by the materialistic enemies of SANNYASA AS AN INSTITUTION. In the face of all this, can we have the effrontery to say that sannyasa is anti-social ? Because there are hundreds of vagabonds masquerading as *sannyasins* and imposing on the credulity of honest citizens, therefore it does not follow that *sannyasa* should be condemned. Cheats are cheats and should be treated as such—house-holder cheats with all their respectability and the so-called *sadhus* preying upon the community. Even now there is a *sannyasin* who is giving a good shaking to India and whose movements are watched with bated breath in all parts of the globe. A *grihi* he once was but no longer can he be called a *grihi* though his grown-up sons and wife live about him, for sex-life he has subdued and a loin-cloth is his only wear. To the Rajarshi type he does not certainly belong, if a Rajarshi is what he is made out to be. MAHATMA GANDHI is the *sannyasin* whom I here mean. The Mahatma is a Hindu, he is proud that he is a Hindu and yet tolerant to all. He does not belong to any reforming sect and yet he is a great reformer. *The only difference between the Mahatma and a Hindu in the full sense of the term* is that the *Kshatriya's dharma* based on justice and chivalry which occupies an important place in the Hindu's scheme of life has no place in the Mahatma's scheme at all. Here he is a Tolstoyist—an uncompromising Tolstoyist. It is also rightly said by his critics that he is not discriminate in the choice of his followers and is not particular about their fitness for the life of his ideal or in other words, he does not recognise the principle of *adhikara-bheda* and presses into his service all who are keen only on political *swaraj,* who are indifferent to that which is of supreme value to him and swear by non-violence only from policy. He wants to subordinate politics to religion. His followers want to subordinate religion to politics. Nor can I blame his followers for their frailties, as political swaraj at a very early date he put in the fore-front of his programme. No wonder that so many flocked to him and talked of non-violence till non-violence be-

came a cant. A true Hindu knows that everyone cannot be non-violent any more than everyone can be a *sannyasin*—even for the sake of swaraj. Had the Mahatma been nothing but a religious preacher and had he not behind him the record of his South African struggles, I doubt very much whether he would have had a hundredth part of the following he commanded in 1920. The split in his camp is due to his lack of insight with all the honesty of his purpose. The DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GANDHI AND VIVEKANANDA lies in the fact that Vivekananda's insight was much keener and common-sense much stronger. Vivekananda became a *sannyasin* without being a *grihi* at all —and non-resistance under all circumstances is the *sannyasin's* ideal—but very well did he know that everyone cannot be a sannyasin and therefore the *Kshatriya's dharma* he never rejected as he never sought to abolish the life of the house-holder. As the house-holder is permitted to beget and own property, so he is permitted to resist when resistance is necessary. This may be a concession to human weakness, but the concession *has* to be made. *This is common sense.* Only the house-holder must never forget the ideal of *sannyasa* and try to approximate to it as far as possible, or in other words, lust, greed and violence he must keep under proper control. This is *dharma* and *dharma* is nothing but a stepping-stone to *Moksha.* The path to *Moksha* is never through *adharma* but through *dharma* alone and when *Moksha* is reached all moral struggle ceases. Man is then the super-man but not in the Nietzscherian sense of the term. He is the super-man because he is above the world of relativity—out of the vicious circle. He may do work for the good of others but *Karma* is no bondage to him. Such a man's work can never be an evil. Swami Vivekananda knew all this. The true spirit of *Varnasrama Dharma* he fully recognised. Mahatma Gandhi is an idealist, but a practical idealist he is not, in spite of his claim. Practical idealist is a term that may be rightly applied to Swami Vivekananda alone in this age of confusion of ideas. To the misfortune of the country, the great Swami passed away at a very early age. He had just time to deliver his message and lay the foundation of his uplifting work. The man has not yet arrived to apply all his ideas to life. If Mahatma Gandhi prepares the ground for the descent of that Saviour, he is welcome by all means. The first requisite for the nation is a severe conception of life, the spirit of stern self-restraint. *No nation-building without man-making*—that is clear ; and the Swami's emphasis was

on man-making which is another name for *his "root-and-branch reform"*. But whether man-making will be developed through the excitement of political agitation in its present form, through the mischievous activities of blatant demagogues, is a matter about which I have very grave doubts. Mahatma Gandhi also sees this now, he sees that there is a considerable waste of the nation's energy and human materials, he sees that the nation is going hopelessly astray—and this is the secret of his present emphasis on constructive work—an emphasis that came from Swami Vivekananda a quarter of a century ago and the Swami never perpetrated a "Himalayan blunder". I would rather not compare the realisations, powers and personalities of the two men.

It is abundantly clear from what has been said above that *Sannyasa* is not anti-social, but if anybody expects a *Sannyasin* to be a boon companion and that sort of thing, he must be sorely disappointed. One reason for the prevailing impression of *Sannyasa* being anti-social appears to me to be the existence of a certain class of *Sannyasins* who live in solitude and practise their *sadhana* in places far from the busy haunts of men. To their own *Mukti* they *can* attain and *do* attain in fact, but the power to save others and do good to humanity they do not possess. Such *Sannyasins* are called "pratyek Buddhas" in Buddhist literature. In the words of Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna, "they are like small chips of wood that can float across to the other shore of the sea, but those who after realising themselves in solitude come back to the world to save other souls and do good to man are like the huge logs that can not only float across themselves but carry on their surface others as well." But that does not justify us in saying that those solitary souls are anti-social—souls that have cut off all connection with the world, who are civilly dead and beyond our ideas of good and evil. Their life may appear to us to be a life of inaction but their spirit of detachment is not wholly without a moral, for "the world is too much with us." Nor does it appear reasonable to class them with do-nothings, because the nature of their work is beyond our ken. Of the subtle power of the spirit very little indeed do we know. Then, as for the mere utilitarian's good of the world about which our talk is so loud, all that can be said is that it is what Carlyle regards as "philanthropy without sense." Do we ever stop to think as to who can do the greater good—men immersed in the world or men who have renounced

all and dedicated themselves to the cause of humanity ? It is a truth the man who runs may see. But how can *we* see at all—*we* who have learnt from Modern Europe, the Protestant Europe, the Mammon-worshipping, industrial, mechanical, imperialistic and chauvinistic Europe that *sannyasa* is anti-social ? Modernism indeed ! The time has come for us to shake off our contemptible slave-mentality, the soul-killing hypnotism induced by the West and to boldly assert ourselves as men.

I do not know when Europe will be able to harmonise the claims of activism and quietism. For the true relation between *karma* and *naishkarmya* the *Bhagavat-Gita* is our only guide.

I have dwelt at such length on asceticism or *sannyasa*, because the culmination of pessimism is ascetic morality or absolute renunciation and what is ordinarily called morality, or, in other words, domestic, social, political and economic morality, without which civilisation is a mockery, has no meaning without reference to the higher morality of *Sannyasa*. What is ordinarily called morality, consistently followed, leads ultimately to this. *Dharma* is nothing but a stepping-stone to *Moksha*. All the super-theistic, theistic and anti-theistic systems of India, with all their differences, are unanimous in their support of two things, namely Pessimism and Asceticism. The hedonism or *pushti-marga* of Charvaka need not be taken seriously at all. It has no influence on the religious thought of India. Leaving then Charvakism out of account when we come to the chief anti-theistic systems of Sankhya, Bauddha and Jaina, we see that, though anti-theistic, they are idealistic beyond a doubt. *The concept of God is not the common factor of our religions and schools of philosophy. The common factor is Pessimism and Asceticism. This is the sadhana of India, this is the ground-note of our culture, this the spirit of our civilisation.* The Absolute or *Ekamevaadwitiyam* (One without a second) of the super-theistic vedanta, the pluralism or *purusha bahava* of the God-less Sankhya, the Nyaya and Vaiseshika systems with their God as the merely efficient cause (*nimitta karana*), the *an-atmanism* and Heracleitan flux (*sunyavada* and *kshanika-vijnanavada*) of Hina-yanist Buddhism, and the frank atheism of the Jaina are all agreed on THREE ESSENTIALS and they are these : (1) life is full of misery ; (2) desire is the cause of our sufferings and (3) the eradication of desire (*trishna*) is the end of our life, variously called Moksha, Nirvana, Kaivalya

and Apavarga. If there is any UNDISPUTED TRUTH IN OUR COUNTRY, it is this. That is why it has been said :—

Veda vibhinna, Smritayo vibhinna
Nasou muniryasya matam na bhinnam.
Dharmasya tattwam nihitam guhayam
Mahajano yena gato sa pantha.

(Vedas differ, Smrithis differ, Rishis differ, the metaphysic of ethics is hidden beyond our gaze. The path trodden by the great souls is the only path for us).

The most noteworthy point in the above *sloka* is the use of the singular number in the word PANTHA (path) which can have one meaning only, viz., that all differences of opinion about the metaphysic of ethics (*dharmasya tattwam*) nothwithstanding, there is no difference whatever as to the ethical ideal or the meaning of life, for all great souls have trodden but one path and that path is no other than the path of *tyaga* (RENUNCIATION). The different paths of Bhagawan Ramakrishna or the Bhagavad-Geeta or the different paths mentioned in the famous *mahimna stotra* known to every Hindu cannot and do not mean that there can be any path other than that of renunciation. What they all mean is that there are different methods of realisation (*sadhana-marga*), such as Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga and there is devotion to different kinds of ISHTAM. The *Ishtam* may mean any form or conception of God, *avatar* (like Buddha, Christ, etc.), saint, the Sovereign Self which is all in all or *Nirvana* which is both negative and positive. *This is our conception of Universal Religion.* We, Vedantists, claim that all paths ultimately lead to *One Reality which alone is,* and systems and faiths other than ours are imperfect but contain elements of truth and therefore need not be wholly rejected. The most important elements of truth in other systems are, according to us, Pessimism and Asceticism. Any religion or any philosophy, including the *vaunted and dogmatic mono-theism,* which does not contain these two elements or denies them, is totally false and is to be wholly rejected. Our chief quarrel is with the *anti-pessimistic and anti-ascetic mono-theism which is the fashionable creed to-day all over the world in some form or other and which is a manifest fraud.* We can tolerate the denial of God but what we can never tolerate is the denial of that which gives a meaning and purpose to our life. MORALITY CAN EXIST AND DOES EXIST WITHOUT THE CONCEPT OF GOD. That is why Swami Vivekananda once

said in my presence : "*An honest atheist is a thousand times better than a hypocritical theist.*" Why take the name of God in vain ? If you really loved God, you would renounce everything for His sake or at least confess your weakness and not seek to justify yourself. "It is not by saying Lord ! Lord ! but by doing the will of the Father in Heaven" that the kingdom of God becomes accessible to you. As for the man who does not do His will, the gate of that kingdom will be slammed in his face. If you believe in God's omniscience, you ought to know that all the praying rogues and canting humbugs are known to Him but too well. I know many theists in India who talk of the *maddhya patha* (the middle path) of Lord Buddha to justify themselves but the *maddhya patha* of Lord Buddha is not the Golden Mean of Aristotle. It implies the absolute chastity and absolute poverty of Lord Buddha's life after the Great Renunciation. Only it deprecates the cruel torturing of the flesh.

The BHAKTI-CULT of India based on the Qualified Non-Dualistic and Dualistic systems of philosophy with PersonalGod as the ultimate reality appeals to the Christian Orientalists of the West, because anthropomorphism is the basis of Christian Theology. Their optimistic or melioristic bias also inclines them in favour of the *leelarasa* of the Vaishnava, though their interpretation of *leela-rasa* is false and unacceptable. But it is not only they but also certain *vaishnavas* of our country including the so-called NEO-VAISHNAVAS OF BENGAL most of whom are England-returned barristers and journalists who interpret *leela-rasa* in this way for reasons I need not explain. These Neo-Vaishnavas say in season and out of season that they are not *tyaga-margis* but *rag-margis,* or in other words, the *leela* of God, which is MANIFESTED in the sense-world and therefore not *Maya* which veils and conceals, is something to be fully enjoyed and that is how God is to be realised. The disreputable low-class *nadas* and *nadis* of Bengal and their brethern in other parts of India also understand *leela-rasa* in this sense and their dissolute life is a reproach to the country and a disgrace to the nation. But is this the *Vaishnavism* of Chaitanya-Deva, the *avatar* of *bhakti* and *prema* (devotion and love) ? Does not Vaishnava mean *vairagi* or one who has renounced the world ? What can possibly be the inner meaning of Chaitanya's *sannyasa* ? Why did he indignantly repudiate his disciple Haridas the younger ? *There can be no prema* (*love*) *without tyaga* (*sacrifice*). How can a selfish

man love anyone but himself ? As long as there is the least desire for worldly enjoyment, so long *Krishna-prema* is impossible. Says Bhagawan Ramakrishna : " It is not by saying 'love,' 'love' that love comes to you. *Krishna-prema* made Sri Chaitanya see Vrindaban in every forest and the Yamuna in all streams." The conclusion is thus inevitable that *even our Bhakti-cult is pessimistic, for this also leads to Sannyasa.* The only difference is that there is *too much softness and lachrymosity in this cult of Bhakti* and it would not be too much to say that the less this cult is spread the better for the country. What *India wants now is not softness but hardness—aye, the hardness of steel.* What is wanted now is a little less stress on the flute of Sri Krishna and a little more stress on his *Sankha* (conch) and *Chakra* (wheel) ; a little less stress on the Sri Krishna of Braja-leela, the Sri Krishna of the Pastoral,

> " Whose artful strains have oft delayed
> The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, "

but the Sri Krishna of Kurukshetra, the inspirer of Arjuna and the Pandava host. The time has come, it seems, for the nation to hear once more the clarion-call of the Gita, the trumpet of Mahadeva and the roaring of the lion of the Vedanta. That feeling, rightly understood, is good for us I have already said, but of feeling we must remember there is a multitude of varieties. Different feelings must be cultivated according to time, place and circumstance, but the goal we must steadily keep in view. The goal is Mukti.

My thesis amounts to this : that Pessimism is the only true view of life and all the arguments that can be advanced in support of this view I have frankly placed before my readers. Actual experience (*pratyaksha*), Inference (*anumana*) and the wisdom of sages (*apta-vakya*) are the chief methods of proof to which I have throughout appealed. These are the three chief pillars on which Hindu methodology rests. I have shown that moral life is impossible without a pessimistic view of life. Are we going to be ashamed because Modern Europe sneers at the philosophy of Pessimism ? It is something of which we should be legitimately proud. It is a clear proof of the moral earnestness (*dharma-nishtha*) of the Hindu race. The keenness of our intellect, our metaphysical subtlety *and gentle quietism Europe readily concedes but what the* Europeans do not so readily acknowledge is the active moral life of India. They think that that is a quality which is the monopoly of the Christians and the Jews. That is why Heb-

raism is the name they have applied to the quality. Hebraism and Hellenism are terms that have been much popularised by Mathew Arnold, the apostle of "Sweetness and Light," the "levite in charge of the ark of culture." European civilisation is the product of their admixture. Both these elements are conspicuous in the civilisation of India. We have no need to go to Europe for the acquisition of these, and so far as Hebraism is concerned, we may very well claim to be the teachers of Europe. Our Hebraism is far superior to the Hebraism of the Jews, for it does not depend on a "living and jealous God" dwelling in Heaven or the craven fear of an eternal Hell. It depends entirely on the manhood of man. It is not national like the Hebraism of the Jew. It has a higher claim to universality than Christianity itself, for the motive power of Christian morality is not Duty for Duty's sake but Duty for the sake of Heaven and Duty from fear of Hell. It is "slave morality" as opposed to the "master morality" of the Hindu and this "master morality" is not the Satanic ideal of Nietzsche. If Nietzsche after graduating in the school of Schopenhauer had prosecuted his post-graduate studies in the atmosphere of India, his philosophy would have been a different thing altogther and the "transvaluation of his values" would have been a different kind of transvaluation. He would have found his super-man but in another sense. Wherever men will be honest seekers after Truth, they will have to accept Hindu Ethics willy-nilly—, it matters very little whether they like to be called Hindus or not.

(To be continued)

EVOLUTION AND PERFECTION

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

INDEED, the recent Tennessee Law has been a blessing in disguise for it has evoked a genuine interest in the public mind to review its ideas about science and religion.

"Does science contradict religion?" "And, if so, is religion a mere myth?" These are the doubts which occupy the human mind of to-day.

One notices with great interest that there are broad-minded preachers of the Christian faith who are courageous enough to publicly admit the scientific fact of evolution and to assert that Christianity has nothing to fear from past or new discoveries of scientific truths. Exactly. But true Christianity and true religion may be contradicted by false speculations of the scientists, and, also, science may be hampered in its growth by the fanatical ideas of false religionists. And that is precisely what we have to be careful about, for there are superstitions in religion as well as in science.

In my last article on the subject, I tried to show that to deny evolution is to deny Christ, and to reject Christ and the Christ ideal is to make science and evolution unscientific.

The modern evolutionists do not believe in Christhood or Perfection, though they do not give us any scientific reason for rejecting the idea. But the supreme goal propounded by the religions of the world, not excluding Christianity itself, is freedom and perfection. That is the fundamental truth and principle of every religion. "Be ye perfect even as the Father in Heaven is perfect." "Know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free." The scientific fact of evolution is not contradictory to this fundamental principle of the religions, but the metaphysical speculations of the scientists do contradict it, because they do not believe in reaching the goal which all religions affirm. And I have no choice but to call this position a *superstitious faith* of the scientists.

I was amused, the other day, to find this superstition even in such a great mind as that of George Bernard Shaw. He says that if there is any such thing as perfection to be attained, all the 'hopes and joys of life' and all the impetus to evolve are taken away. Splendid! They all prefer to "dream in

air," as the Sanskrit logicians put it. But how can there be 'hopes and joys' of life if there is no hope of the hopes to be realized? Is it our lot to "dream in the air" all the time and to call this hoping progress? The child mind wants to get surprises. It always hopes and does not know what is coming, and there is its joy. But as we grow in years and in experience, we do not like to hope and work for any indefinite end or purpose. We want a definite goal and ideal and then alone are there the hopes and joy of success.

To be clearer and more precise on the point. The evolutionists of the West believe that man's destiny is to go on always improving, always struggling towards, but never reaching the goal. *Infinite progress*! That is the watchword of these evolutionists. It sounds very nice, but is absurd on the very face of it. Can you, scientists, think of motion in a straight line? Is not every motion in a circle? Why then speak of infinite progress? A straight line infinitely prolonged will end in a circle. What is the modern theory with regard to electricity? The power leaves the dynamo and completes the circle back to the dynamo. And so with our progression and evolution. We come from God and we go back to Him after completing the circle. God is *involved* in every being and through the process of evolution, God, or the innate Perfection in every being, becomes *evolved*, and then it is that the *purpose* of life and evolution is fulfilled. If you scientists want facts for experiment and proof respecting this Hindu ideal, study the lives of Christ, Buddha, Ramakrishna and a host of others.

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

GLEANINGS

NO VALUES EXCEPT SPIRITUAL ONES

A conversation between Professor James Scott Haldane and a *Daily Chronicle* correspondent on the practical biological aspect of the future of the toilers of human society is given in one of the recent issues of the *Hindu*. Says the correspondent :

I asked him whether, as a biologist, he could tell me if the human being would become, so to speak, less animal and more "human" in the future.

"The civilised man," he said, "is certainly evolving physiologically. He is losing many qualities, functions, and intuitive faculties he once possessed, and which uncivilised man retains to some extent, but he is getting greater advantages in other directions, and this tendency will become more marked as time goes on.

A POWER WE HAVE LOST

"Man does not stand still physiologically, though it may be difficult, on a close view, to see the steps of progress. Some recent experiments in so-called telepathy by Professor Gilbert Murray furnish an illustration. In his case, undoubtedly, the results set down by some to *mysterious thought transference* were really due to sub-conscious auditory activity; in him—unconsciously to himself—there exists still some of the power of calling up into consciousness very faint impressions which the fineness and sharpness of the senses account for. In general we have lost much of this power. It may be reawakened to some extent in all of us, and very considerably in a few.

"Take, for instance, the power most people possess of shutting out what is not relevant in noisy surroundings, if the necessity arise. I have been in a beetling mill in Belfast where the noise was so deafening that I could not hear one single word of what was even shouted. But the girls working there were able to carry on conversation in ordinary tones and to hear one another quite well.

"I think that water-divining probably supplies another instance. In certain persons the awareness of faint vibrations from the ground over which they are walking is still retained, and they have learned how to interpret it as a sign of running water below.

"The sense of direction is another instance. A civilised man in a mountain mist or fog wanders round and round in circles, and gets lost in a thick forest. A savage has no more difficulty in keeping a straight direction than a carrier pigeon in 'finding direction' when released in a strange neighbourhood, or than most cats have in finding their way home from an unknown place to which they have been conveyed in a closed hamper. Not only do they possess a sub-conscious record of all their movements, but this record is always integrated with reference to their homes, so that by calling it up into consciousness they can at any time find their way to their homes. Civilised man has learned to employ other, and in the long run more, effective methods."

"And as we cease to employ the old faculties, so we lose them, and this tendency in the future will become more and more apparent ?" I suggested.

OUR DEPENDENCE ON SCIENCE

"Yes, as we progress in civilisation, and have less and less use for the exercise of these intuitive faculties, we come to depend more and more on scientific calculation."

"You are hinting at a time in the future when even the remnant of such intutive reckoning will be lost, and we shall be wholly dependent on calculation. Does this mean that the man of the future will physiologically have gone backward."

"No, we should not be too concerned about such losses. It is simply that we are learning to make successful use of scientific abstractions which, though they do not represent more than a limited aspect of reality, are yet usually excellent for immediate practical purposes ,and this process, of course, will be more and more marked in the future."

"Then if this loss of intuitive faculties is compensated by a gain in the acquisition of greater experience in using abstractions, do you think that in the future we shall be able to make practical use of fresh scientific knowledge in the biological field to hasten evolution, if I may so express it ?"

"Biological conceptions will I think, bulk far more in the public eye than at present. To pick out one concrete example as an illustration—we shall probably breed new and useful kinds of plants and animals far more quickly than in the past, and maintain them much more easily."

"If we are to be able to control the breeding of plants and animals in this way, shall we, do you think, breed a new kind of man ?"

Professor Haldane smiled and shook his head.

"No, but the application of biological and physiological knowledge to humanity will probably improve man's habits, capacities, and outlook. There is, for instance an idea abroad to-day that the ideal state is to have little to 'do' and to 'get' as much as possible. Biologically, this is all wrong. The idea is that one is getting 'satisfaction' by obtaining as much as possible with as little effort as possible. But this has really been a source of general degradation. It has misled many labour unions ; for those guiding them have absorbed the belief that it is a human ideal to do as little and to get as much as possible, and with altruistic intentions they have tried to help others to realise this aim.

BIOLOGICAL VALUE OF WORK

"Yet really and truly nobody naturally wants this for himself ; we only imagine we do, and act on the mistaken conviction. Physiologically we know that people must be making effort if they are to be healthy. Biologically it is bad for us always to be thinking of our mere individual interests. We need to be up and doing something useful."

"Then you feel that the growing tendency to look at life from this biological standpoint will enable the man and woman of the future to correct some of the physio-psychological mistakes society has fallen into along with its complicated modern civilisation ?"

"Yes, for this way of looking at things—it is closely related to what may be called a new psychology—shows us the error of the old conception of people as mere units existing independently of one another . The new psychology—

the psychology of the future—teaches us that they really exist as the manifestations of a spiritual reality which pervades them and is all round them. *This is diametrically* opposed to the mechanistic theology which was the counterpart of mechanistic science, but is of the very essence of true religion.

"An isolated individual human organism is merely a scientific abstraction; and we are already learning to realise this. The man of the future will understand it, and shape his conduct by this new conception. The biological behaviour of individual human organisms is unintelligible apart from their relations to other human organisms and the rest of their environment. But when we look beyond mere biology and psychology, which is the branch of knowledge dealing with conscious behaviour, we see that we belong in the most intimate sense to our environment, and that this environment is in reality a spiritual one."

RECOGNITION OF SPIRITUAL VALUES

"In a way the modern physicist seems almost to teach us that—will he come round *completely to your view, and bring public opinion with* him, do you think, in the future ?"

"In many ways physics is altering fundamentally, and its basic conceptions seem to be coming very near to those necessary to biology. It is hard to speak of the future, but I think it is certain that the apparent difference between inorganic and organic phenomena is going to disappear, and such a *shifting attitude is bound* to have an influence on our daily lives in the future. "If we were to wake up 100 years hence I think we should find that people regarded with astonishment the materialism of the present generation, and would be at a loss to imagine how sane folk could ever have held such views."

"The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have wonderfully improved machi*nery, but those who have laboured at the task* have often never seen that there are no real values except spiritual values. This has been partially recognised in literature, art and religion. In the future I think society will recognise it far more clearly, helped thereto by the greater and deeper biological knowledge that will become available, and by the gradual approximation of the new physics, in the hands of the younger generation, to the standpoint of the new biology."

THE MIDDLE PATH

The *Blessing,* a Sinhalese monthly, has the following :—

"What is wrong, with the moderns, that the Path so well guarded is now scarcely trod ? The Westerner complains that we of the East sit placidly, studying and admiring our beautiful map of the Path, but never budging to tread it. The impatient Westerner who attempts to hustle us, and push past, on to the Path, only succeeds in hurling himself to premature disaster. Is there not a *via media* for us, who worship Him Who was Lord of the Middle Path ?

"We feel between our reverent placidity and the Westerner's restless bustle lies the middle way we seek. The West needs more of reverence and calm : we need more enterprise and energy ; and we are convinced that whichever party first succeeds in remedying its deficiencies will be the first to present Saints to our decadent world. Our sincere wish is that, concurrent, both may achieve this consummation, and—*May there be Blessing.*"

INDO-CHINESE CIVILIZATION

The unique power of absorption and unification possessed by Hindu Civilisation is expressed in the following words by Mr. C. F. Andrews in an article on Indo-Chinese Civilisation in the *Current Thought* :—

"To the Hindu, who cherishes his ancient culture and traditions, one of the most profoundly interesting countries in the Far East to study is Combodia, the centre of the Khmer Empire, which once extended its spiritual and temporal sway from the Gulf of Siam up to the Middle Kingdom of China. In the twelfth century of the present era, when Aryan Hinduism in the north of India was receiving one defeat after another at the hands of the rising Mahomedan powers from Central Asia, a Hindu monarch, named Jayavarman VIII, was ruling over this Khmer Empire, which then stretched literally from the Bay of Bengal on one side to the Pacific Ocean on the other. It was divided into sixty self-governing republics, and, according to the Hindu spiritual genius, which always tends towards a diversity within a unity—was rather a great federation of friendly States under one Emperor than a centralised personal despotism. Jayavarman VIII was trully the Chakravarti of his times in the Far East.

"Yet, how little is known of all this in India ! How rarely is it even mentioned ! What an insignificant place is given to this Hindu expansion in any Indian History ! How few, even of educated Indians, reading these words of mine, have ever studied the facts and realised their wonderful meaning ! No country has ever treated its own past historical records so carelessly as India !

"About eight hundred years ago, this great Hindu Civilisation was one of the chief world-factors in the Far East. It was not built up, in the main, as far as history reveals, by military power, but rather by sheer intellectual genius winning its way among backward peoples and unifying them as they had never been united before.

"I had often read in books, how this one vast Hindu Civilisation in the South-East had stretched wider and wider its arms to embrace the races round it. Its direct origin and early history are somewhat obscure, but it probably reached the height of its fame and influence at the time I have mentioned, about 1100 A. D., many centuries after the first Hindus had settled in the country and made their influence felt.

"It is not quite certain from whence these Hindu Colonisers came, and how the expansion took place which covered the South of Asia. But the evidence goes to show that they first sailed along the Eastern Coast of the Bay of Bengal and colonised and civilised as they went. We have very early traces of such settlements in Burma ; then further South in Malaya ; then in Sumatra, and last of all in Java and Bali and Celebes.

"We must realise that the Hindu Civilisation was intellectually and artistically paramount in those ages in the East to an unparalleled degree.

"Of all the architectural remains in Combodia, revealing the Indo-Chinse Civilisation, the greatest undoubtedly is Angkor-Vat, the vast temple ruin in the heart of the City of Angkor, the capital of the Khmer Kingdom. The architecture is colossal : the sculpture and carving are a work of remarkable beauty. There is nothing quite like it in the world, and it may be rightly named, along with the Pyramids, as one of the wonders of the world. It stands out, along with Borobudur, as one of the two greatest monuments of the Far East.

"The whole of Combodia is still under the influence of Hindu-Buddhist traditions. Hindu ceremonies can be everywhere traced. Hindu festivals are constantly observed. Buddhism is the State Religion. But very little now remains of the treasures of all this Hindu civilisation in the soul of this wonderful people except a gentleness of manners, a dignity of bearing, and a perfect beauty of Aryan feature in men and women alike. These old majestic buildings, which Hindu architects built, and the culture that lies behind them, are all that can now be seen of one of the noblest Empires of the East. Yet still beauty lingers, even in the present state of fallen greatness.

"Yet one of the saddest parts of the story still remains to be told. The Khmer's now appear to be almost a dying race. They seem to have lost their *ancient spirit of unconquerable intellectual strength.* They have become dull and lifeless, and have lost even the desire to live.

"It is difficult to read a passage like this without a throb of emotion. The thought of all that vanished greatness, so noble, so artistic, so spiritual, like some perfect flower of human culture,—makes it impossible to believe that all of it can have passed away, never to return in other forms. The theory of reincarnation, if it is true, must surely have its meaning for kingdoms and peoples, as well as individuals.

"But while I have read this passage from a book of travels over and over again, and pondered over its spiritual meaning, I have only become the more certain that from India itself must go out to Combodia and to Bali and to other centres where Hinduism is not really dead, but only moribund, a new reviving message. It is, to me, a matter of intense and earnest longing, that some at least of the treasures of religious wisdom and devotion stored up in India should reach this Hindu race in its day of adversity and save it from extinction,—just as a drowning man may be saved from utter death even at the last moment of exhaustion by a timely outstretched hand. With the new facilities of travel, the way is more easy to tread than it was of old when monks and sannyasins crossed on foot the high Pamirs and the snow-girt passes of the Karakoram, and faced in open boats the terrors of the typhoons, in order to carry forward from India their spiritual message to enrich mankind. If any word that I have written in this article, or in those that I have been writing from time to time in *Current Thought* should inspire any Hindu devotee to make a pilgrimage abroad to these old centres of the Hindu Faith, I shall be amply rewarded. Knowing well how deep in the heart the tradition of the ancient faith of Hinduism is stored, I do not cease to hope that dying Combodia may one day see a small band of religious enthusiasts from India who may fan once more into a flame the still flickering light of Hindu culture in this far-off land."

EDITORIAL NOTES

WORSHIP OF THE TERRIBLE

IT is the temerity of the human heart that makes it shun the terrible aspect of the Real. All religions tell their votaries that God is all merciful, the most benign Lord of the creation, in whose saving grace we must repose our fate. All scriptures vie with each other in describing Him as *Ananda maya, Prema maya,* the God of Love. And it is but natural that man instinctively turns away from aught that causes suffering to him and yearn for that safe haven of bliss. In his mind he creates a double universe, one belonging to the Blessed Lord where nothing but bliss resides and the other the world of suffering and misery under the sway of some dark fiend; and herein lies the origin of the Satan-and-God theory of the Semitic religions.

But here in India the Vedic thinkers, in plumbing the depths of life, found out the secret, and that is why while designating all lives as food of the omnipotent God, called death as a side-dish in this universal feast of His. They found out that as shadow is inevitable with light and as such may be called another aspect of it, so death and dark vicissitudes of life are but another aspect of the same blessed Reality that gives us life.

When we analyse these gloomy facts of life which we instinctively aver we find that they mean nothing else but a change in the retrograde order. Life is but an unbroken series of changes, but when the change happens for the expansion of the Self, for the enlargement of life, it is felt as pleasure or joy. But when it entails contraction and limitation of life, it is always felt as misery and suffering. This dictum is true both in the case of physical as well as mental affections. It has been physiologically determined that the sensation which is felt as painful is produced through the contraction of the nerve cells, and, when the sensation is pleasureable, there happens an elongation or expansion of the nerves. Similarly the mental affections of pain and pleasure occur exactly in the same way by the contraction and expansion of that psychological complex we call Self. If the change brings expansion of knowledge, power, life, and possessions it is felt as joyful but if it means curtailment of the values of life it is felt as misery.

The same thing can be said with equal force of the two most principal facts of life, viz., birth and death. It is now acknowledged on all hands that death is not the extinction of life. The existence of the disembodied souls has begun to come within the experiments of the empirical science. It means only a change, a reshuffling of the physical vesture, a translation of the human consciousness, a change in the outlook of life. And again from the same it can be postulated that birth is not the origin of life. " The star that rises here has its elsewhere setting. " Indeed this is the whole fact of life. The seed, in changing into a tree, must pass through the process of destruction of its seed form and the best vitality of the tree turns into seed again. This cycle of change from seed to tree and from the tree back to the seed again is the whole mystery of birth and death. As there is no origin of anything in reality so there is no destruction. Looked at from this angle of right vision birth and death which are so portentous facts of life would lose half their value and seriousness, and all that cast a gleam of joy or a gloom of sorrow in relation to them would appear as nothing more than the play of light and shade of the sailing moon of the summer sky.

This is philosophy and when philosophy is translated into life it becomes religion. And Hinduism has made wonderful preparations for conveying these sound truths of Vedantic philosophy into actual life with the help of symbols and ceremonies. In the whole range of symbology that Hinduism takes recourse to, for the popularisation of the truths of Vedanta, there are two symbols which stand pre-eminent above all religious symbols of the world. One is the great Nataraja Murti, the dancing posture of the Lord Siva, and the other is the image of the Divine Mother Kali. Both are the creations of the Tantric Age of India, the first belonging to the Saiva Agama of the south and the second to the *Sakta Agama* of the north. In the dancing posture of the Great God Siva are symbolised all the three principal facts of life, viz., creation, preservation, and destruction. And the true worship of this Divine Dancer constitutes in the meditation upon His eternal dance from which proceed life, and death as well. And if man can fill his soul with this meditation then many a gloom that troubles him in life will be dispelled, and he will come to know the true meaning of the sorrows and the joys of life and it would make him the greatest hero on earth.

The image of the Divine Mother Kali imports exactly the same significance. But the Kali aspect of the Divine Being is a bit too terrible for an ordinary mind to understand. But the followers of the Sakta Tantra being trained in the lore can easily understand the grandeur and sublimity of the symbol. The nude figure of dark blue hue, adorned with skulls and corpses, holding the tokens of creation (*vara*), preservation (*abhaya*), destruction (the sword) and post-destruction (the skull) in Her four hands, standing in the posture of *pratyaleedha* dance, though fierce in apperance of destruction, yet Her soft eyes beaming with light of grace and compassion, under Her feet lying low the Great God Siva like a motionless corpse,—all these stir up in the heart of the devotee the wonderful idea of the *Sivasakti-samyoga,* the great union of Intelligence and Energy from which proceed the whole creation and life and to which again they wend. The dark blue hue is the colour of the infinity. The nudity means the uncovered, unconditionally self-conditioned nature of that Universal Energy whose dance or play is *Life*. Siva is the Absolute Intelligence and as such is perfectly motionless and inactive. Activity belongs to the domain of energy and energy is inseperable in its real being from the principle of intelligence—matter being another aspect of spirit. This energy is not an inert lifeless entity of the materialist but is instinct with intelligence, principle and purpose, as it springs from Intelligence itself. And this Intelligent Energy is the source of all life.

As all forms are only concrete expressions of the inner Reality, the substance, so these divine forms like *Nataraja* or *Mother Kali* are not mere imaginings of poets' fancy, but actual manifestations of the inner truths of life. It may sound mystic to an untrained mind but the fact is these visions are permanent realities of a *sadhaka's* experiences, and that is why they have gained a permanent place in our religion. Sri Ramakrishna used to call these *Nityarupas* of God. They are as real as the Absolute or immanent God of the philosopher's mind, if not more.

In the worship of Kali we have the wonderful worship of the Terrible. The method prescribed in the Tantras contain all those sublime elements that go to prepare the human mind to see the hand of God in everything and steel his heart against all depression and distress. It is a process of eradicating evil by its denial. As there is no such thing as absolute evil and what we call evil being nothing else but a wrong reading

of the good, evil gets eradicated simply by its denial. We have hypnotised ourselves into the belief that we are bound and suffering, so this grand universal hypnosis naturally disappear when it is denied by the opposite process of thought. Hence Vedanta tells man to deny all evil simply by seeing good or God in everything. Like the sage Pavhari Baba we must learn to accept even physical ailments as guests from the Beloved." When evil is denied from life one fails to see evil at all afterwards. Hence Hinduism teaches man to worship God in His aspect of Good and Graceful as well as in His aspect of Evil and Destruction. And Tantra has elaborated upon this terrible aspect of God, and it will be a real redemption for this misery-ridden world, if it follows this advice of Tantra.

"For Terror is thy name,
Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for e'er.
Thou 'Time' the All-Destroyer !
Come, O Mother, come !

"Who dares misery love,
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes."

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE STUDENT'S OWN MAGAZINE is a new enterprise in journalism. It seeks to take the Indian student out of the narrow rut in which he moves, to make him self-reliant and resourceful. It contains stories, Science Jottings, Questions and answers, gems of wisdom, advice to students about study, health, *etc.* At the end of every item is appended a vocabulary of difficult words with their meanings in simple words to help the young student. We have no doubt that the Students' Own Magazine will be of much help to our school boys—Published by Shiv Dass, B. A., B. T., Capital Industrial Bureau, Ram Gali, Lahore Annual subscription Rs. 2|-.

THE PREMA (A Quarterly Journal, edited by Mr. Taranath and published from the Premayatana Ashrama, Tungabhadra) with the picture of Swami Vivekananda adorning its frontispiece and his call ' Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached "as its motto, with a series of Premayatana Bulletins full of suggestions to unselfish workers, with the Drama 'the Purpose' with its educative and inspiring appeal, rather than artistic, with the life of Manik Prabhu, the Hindu Saint who adopted and recognised Muahmmadan forms of worship, and other articles—, is the expression of a new faith and strength that is strongly coursing into the veins of the nation, an echo of the man-making message of the great Swami Vivekananda, and is sure to be welcomed by all lovers of the country.

In 'the Impetus' the Editor has truly said that '*the life of the saints is the religion of the masses*' and has rightly laid emphasis on the necessity of holding lesser ideals, and so more intelligible ones, to the commonality and ocular demonstrations of the truth of the great religion of the Hindus, instead of teaching mere dogma and high philosophy, often wrongly interpreted by lay, inexperienced and worldly minded scholars, which though great and ennobling, fall flat on the people and make them confound Satva and Tamas and degrade. ' Any religion that teaches that this life is all bad and detestable but *fails to give a glimpse of that beyond* is bound to make its votaries dull and cheerless.' Surely, insistence on positive ideas alone can give Shraddha. We wish our contemporary all success.

SETU BANDHAN and THE COMING OF KALKI :—These two pieces of art in the Oriental Art Series by Mr. M. S. Sarma illustrate the well-known incident of the Ramayana and the mythological conception of the Kalki Purana. The Kalki seated on a white horse representing the pure white brilliant light of knowledge is riding at lightning speed through thick clouds of darkness which move away at the approach of the coming avatar. ' Setu Bandhan ' shows a rare, but interesting piece of engineering feat. The monkeys of Rama hanging themselves into a chain from a tree in India has got hold of another in Lanka by swinging, thus forming a living bridge over which all the young ones pass to Lanka. The mighty Hanuman at the other end of the chain holding the Asoka Vriksha with one hand and the chain with the other is the leader of the

mighty circus, while Rama and Lakshman and Sugriva supervise the work of the Rama's Bridge, and Sita at the foot of the Asoka tree is eagerly awaiting Rama's coming. These pictures as novel presentations of old and familiar ideas should meet with approval at the hands of all patrons of Indian art. Etching is not a sufficiently developed art in this country and Mr. Sarma deserves praise for his new enterprise in this line. Size 14 x 20. Price Rs. 1-8-0 per plate. To be had of Messrs. M. S. Sarma & Sons, Artists and Illutrators, 19, Raja Hanumantha Lala Street, Triplicane, Madras.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI NIRMALANANDAJI IN KERALA

His Holiness Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj, the President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Banglore, has just returned to his headquarters after four months of tour and work in Kerala. He visited all the Maths in Travancore and opened a new Ashrama at Muttam, some four miles distant from the Ashrama at Haripad. Seven more Brahmacharins were, this time, initiated in Sannyas. A new Ashrama is under construction at Ottapalam. Two plots of land, one at Trichur and the other at Ollur, in Cochin, were given by devotees for Ashramas

OPENING OF THE R. K. MISSION ASHRAMA, BOMBAY

The opening ceremony of the R. K. Mission Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, which was under construction since February last after the foundation stone was laid by His Holiness the Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, was performed by His Holiness Swami Sharvanandaji Maharaj on the 26th instant. There were special puja, bhajana, and distribution of prasad to the assembled devotees. Swami Sharvanandaji will continue to stay in Bombay till the end of November.

THE MORNING STAR, PATNA

The Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Patna, has started a new weekly, "THE MORNING STAR," from the beginning of September, under the Editorship of Swami Avyaktananda. The journal is devoted to the cause of the harmonisation of religions, spirituality and Indian nationaliism. Annual subscription Rs. 2-4-0.

VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, JAMSHEDPUR

Annual Report for 1924 :—The Society presents a good record of activities during its fifth year, 1924. Some preaching work was done on the occasion of the visits of H. H. Swami Abhedanandaji Maharaj, Kripasharam Mahastabir, and Miss Macleod. The Society keeps a free Reading Room and a Library which, though small, has a vigorous circulation ; books are issued free to students. Three Vivekananda Free Schools are conducted by the Society, all of them making remarkable progress. A new Students' Home has been started with four boys who are taught reading, writing, gardening, *etc.* They also assist in the household work and join in the daily prayers. Realizing that mere sentiment and enthusiasm won't turn out practical work, the society

has also opened a worker's Training Centre, where on an average fifteen workers are being trained for various kinds of service and who are showing a growing capacity for regular and sustained work. This centre is self-supporting and also feeds the students of the Home. The society has also done some philanthropic work such as attending numerous patients including typhoid cases, cremating the dead, giving occasional help to the poor and the needy, *etc.* A loan Fund has been created for rescuing the poor from the clutches of cruel money-lenders. The society has now established itself in its permanent quarters by the construction of the society's buildings such as the workers' and Students' Homes, the Hall and the Library. We wish the society our hearty good wishes for still greater work in the years to come.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA SOCIETY, CALCUTTA.

Second Anniversary and Annual Report for 1924—

The second anniversary of the above society came off on Sunday the 13th September, at the Albert Institute Hall under the Presidency of Mr. C. F. Andrews. The hall was over-crowded and many distinguished men of light and leading attended the meeting. After garlanding the President, Sj. Monilal Banerjee sang the opening song specially composed for the occasion. Then Swami Abhedananda made a short Vedic Prayer in Sanskrit and translated it into English. The General Secretary Sj. Raj Kumar Chakravarty then read the Annual Report for 1924. It speaks well of the workers who were successful in organising a Library and a Free Reading Room ; regular classes for moral and religious instructions on non-denominational lines ; classes for tailoring, cane-work, spinning (charka), carpentry, and other home industries ; opening a charitable homeopathic dispensary ; publishing a number of useful books ; carrying on a vigorous propaganda against untouchability and in doing social service in a variety of ways. The reference in the report about the activities of the two branches of the society at Darjeeling and Hajigunge were particularly happy. Then a song was sung in chorus by the girls of the " Iswar Asram. "

Prof. C. R. D. Naidu was the first speaker. He explained the philosophy of the Practical Vedanta through the development of the nerves and mulcses of the human system. Sj. Hirendra Nath Dutt explained the true principles of Vedanta.

Sj. Bhupendra Nath Dutta, who was specially introduced by the President as the brother of Swami Vivekananda spoke at length on the activities of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order in America from the standpoint of national utility and pointed out that they have been able to dispel many of the prejudices that existed against India in various ways. He pleaded for foreign propaganda. He did not mean any political propaganda, but the establishment of cultural contact between the east and the west in every department of human life. He strongly deprecated the aloofness of India and asked the audience to allow tre world current to come in and not build a Chinese Wall and say that they are the most spiritual people.

Ray Yatindra Nath Choudhury, M. A., B. L., and Sj. Amrita Lal Bose next spoke about the high function of Vedanta and showed how the Vedantic Religion could unify the whole world. Dr. Moreno

interpreted Vedanta as the last wisdom and pointed out how there was divinity in every man. He wondered why the Indians did not carry these noble truths abroad. Europe after the Great War was bleeding, and India alone could save her. Let India conquer the whole world by the golden rule of Ahimsa and Love. Let Indians be the torch bearers and harbingers of Liberty to the world by preaching the religion of equity by seeing the same Self in the greatest and the lowest. Sj. Sachindra Nath Mukherjee, M. A., B. L., spoke highly of Swami Vivekananda and Abhedananda's work in America by which the Westerners realised the highest spiritual heritage of India. He advised the Indians to follow the paths of their fore-fathers and to be strong in body and soul.

Mr. C. F. Andrews then delivered his short but very effective presidential address. He said in the course of his speech that any one who knows of the conditions under which the vast multitude of the Calcutta students are obliged to live to-day must be intensely thankful that in their midst the Swamiji is working as a living example of goodness and self-sacrifice and is holding up the light of religion in the midst of so much that drags down the soul of man. He next referred to the desperate need of about 20 lakhs of our fellow country-men, in Malaya, Fiji, Mauritious, and other parts of the world, and appealed to the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society and the Ramakrishna Mission to do something for them. He next made it quite clear that there is no rivalry between the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society and the Ramakrishna Mission. They are entirely working together in every sense of the word ; and because the work has branched out into two different tracks, it is all the more strong and effective. He next feelingly appealed to the students at least one of them to go out to Fiji to serve the brethren there who are not able to rescue themselves from all the miseries and evils, to put them on their feet again and to make them men and women. Lastly he thanked the office-bearers and the workers of the society and wished them every success.

Sj. Dilip Kumar Roy then entertained the vast audience with his sweet and soul-stirring music. With a vote of thanks proposed by Sj. Monindra Nath Mitter, Solicitor, and seconded by Swami Lavanananda, and a closing song specially composed for this occasion by Sj. Amritalal Bose, the meeting dispersed late at night.

VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, COLOMBO

The Report of the Vivekananda society of Colombo, for the year 1924, also has a record of good works to its credit.

It celebrated the birthday anniversaries of all the sixty-five Saiva saints, of Sri La Arumuga Navalar, and of Swami Vivekananda. The society invited various distinguished men and arranged many public lectures, Katha prasangams, and scripture classes for the benefit of the public. The society keeps a fairly good Library and Reading Room. It collected and remitted a sum of Rs. 313 towards South Indian flood relief. For the solution of the problem of Buddha's Shrines in Hindu hands and of Hindu Shrines in Buddhist hands the society has suggested to various influential bodies that all these temples should be placed under the joint management of Hindus and Buddhists.

There came out the heart, from the heart the mind from the mind the moon.

There sprang forth the nevel, from the navel the *apana*, from *apana* death.

There came out the generative organ, from the organ seed, from the seed water.

[NOTE:—In describing this process of creation the imagery was drawn from the process of development of the embryo in an egg or the fœtus in an womb. As after impregnation the morula or the life-nucleus floats in the amnionic fluid and in the fluid itself the fœtus develops, and at different stages the developments of different organs and senses take place until parturition ; so here also the Virat Purusha was first imagined to have been evolved out of water and then gradually the organs, the senses and the presiding dieties of the respective senses were imagined to have been evolved. It may appear curious at first that the Sruti should have described the evolving of the senses from the sense organs and the presiding deities from the senses themselves, but the point becomes perfectly clear when we take note of the process of the evolution of the fœtus itself. In its evolution first appears the organ and then gradually the power of utilising the organ which is generally called the *quickening* stage and then subsequently the expressions of the principle of consciousness through all these senses and organs. The appearance of consciousness or *Chaitanya* or *devata,* as it is figuratively described in the Vedas, completes the embryonic condition of life and brings it out to the world of expression. As in every organic being we notice the three factors, viz., the organ, the energising principle of the organ and the intelligence controling the energy and the organ, so three things are always distinguished in the above Sruti i.e., the physical organ or the seat of the senses, the senses themselves, and the presiding deities of of the senses. The presiding dieties, *Abhimanidevatas,* should not be taken in the sense that they are so many spirits or angels controlling the different organs of man, but they should be understood in the Vedantic sense of the different expression of the same *Atma-chaitanya* or

intelligence, working differently through the different sensations. That is why we find the wôrd *devatas* often used for the senses in the Upanishads.]

End of the First Chapter.

Aitareya Upanishad.

CHAPTER II.

ता एता देवताः सृष्टा अस्मिन्महत्यर्णवे प्रापतन् । तमशनापिपासाभ्यामन्ववार्जत् । ता एनमब्रुवन्नायतनं नः प्रजानीहि यस्मिन्प्रतिष्ठिता अन्नमदामेति ॥ १ ॥

ताः those सृष्टाः created एताः these देवताः gods अस्मिन् in this महति great अर्णवे ocean प्रापतन् fell. तं them अशनापिपासाभ्यां with hunger and thirst अन्ववार्जत् got united. ताः they एनं to Him अब्रुवन् said नः to us आयतनं dwelling place प्रजानीहि ordain, determine (वयं we) यस्मिन् in which प्रतिष्ठिताः being established अन्नं food अदाम shall eat.

1. Those gods, thus created, fell into this great ocean of the world. Then He united them with hunger and thirst.

They told Him: show us a place in which being established we may eat food.

[NOTE.—The gods, being created, are naturally made subject to the limitations of life, and these limitations or conditioned states of existence are spoken of here as hunger and thirst. It is instinctive with conditioned life to desire to transcend its limitations, and in this desire lies the seed of progress or retardation of the conditioned life. Even the gods, however powerful they may be, yet, compared with the infinite grandeur of the Soul, are stricken with limitations of life.

The great ocean of the world.—The world is always compared in the Sanskrit literature with the ocean on account of its infinite danger and difficulty to be crossed. The Sanskrit word *samsara* means the interminable chain of life and death which constitute the life of this world.]

ताभ्यो गामानयत्ता अब्रुवन्न वै नोऽयमलमिति । ताभ्योऽश्वमानयत्ता अब्रुवन्न वै नोऽयमलमिति ॥ २ ॥

ताभ्यः to them गां cow आनयत् brought. ताः they अब्रुवन् said अयं this नः for us न वै is not अलम् sufficient. ताभ्यः to them

अश्वं horse आनयत् brought. ताः they अब्रुवन् said अयं this नः for us न वै is not अलम् sufficient.

2. Then He brought a cow to them but they said : it is indeed not sufficient for us.

He brought them again a horse but again they said : it is not sufficient for us.

ताभ्यः पुरुषमानयत्ता अब्रुवन्सुकृतं बतेति पुरुषो वाव सुकृतं ता अब्रवीद्यथायतनं प्रविशतेति ॥ ३ ॥

ताभ्यः to them पुरुषं man आनयत् brought. ताः they अब्रुवन् said सुकृतं well done बत in joy. पुरुषः man. वाव verily सुकृतं well created. ताः to them अब्रवीत् said यथायतनं to proper abode प्रविशत enter.

3. Then He brought them again man, seeing whom they exclaimed in joy : well done. And therefore well-done indeed is man.

Then He told them : do ye enter into your own proper places.

[NOTE.—In the evolution of life man comes after the appearance of animals like cows and horses, and as animals are devoid of the power of discrimination and higher intelligence, gods cannot reside in them fully. It is only in man where life reaches its acme of glory gods come to reside. Excepting the human body all other bodies are called *bhogayatana*, i e., bodies meant for sufferings or enjoyments only. Only the human body is called the *Karmayatana*, i.e., the body with which *Karmas* can be done. So Sruti figuratively tells here that gods entered only the body of man.]

अग्निर्वाग्भूत्वा मुखं प्राविशद्वायुः प्राणो भूत्वा नासिके प्राविशदादित्यश्चक्षुर्भूत्वाऽक्षिणी प्राविशद्दिशः श्रोत्रं भूत्वा कर्णौ प्राविशन्नोषधिवनस्पतयो लोमानि भूत्वा त्वचं प्राविशंश्चन्द्रमा मनो भूत्वा हृदयं प्राविशन्मृत्युरपानो भूत्वा नाभिं प्राविशदापो रेतो भूत्वा शिश्नं प्राविशन् ॥ ४ ॥

अग्निः Agni वाक् भूत्वा having become speech मुखं mouth प्राविशत् entered ; वायुः Vayu प्राणः smell भूत्वा having become नासिके into the nostrils प्राविशत् entered ; आदित्यः Aditya चक्षुः भूत्वा having become the sight अक्षिणी into the two eyes प्राविशत्